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By-King, William D.

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Strongly criticized are the New York City Board of Education (especially its Board of Examiners), the Council of Supervisory Associations, and the United Federation of Teachers. These institutions are said to be responsible for maintaining a white-dominated school system which "systematically" excludes Negroes and Puerto Ricans from leadership positions in the schools. Needed are new educational philosophies and institutions, new curriculums in colleges and universities, and "new professionals, experts, and technicians." (NH)

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A STATEMENT OF POSTURE TOWARD PUBLIC EDUCATION IN NEW YORK CITY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Seventh Annual Awards Luncheon
of
The Federation of Negro Civil
Service Organizations, Inc.

October 21, 1967

WILLIAM D. KING

Teacher, World Minority Group Problems - Edward W. Stitt Junior High School, New York City

Consultant, Special Education & Community Program Development

President, Community Teachers Association, Inc.

1st Vice Chairman, Board of Directors, Haryou-Act Community Corporation

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Acting Principal, James Fenimore Cooper Junior High School
New York City

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A STATEMENT OF POSTURE TOWARD PUBLIC EDUCATION IN NEW YORK CITY

I. Does a Tyrannical Bureaucratic Corporation Control Public Education in New York City and Perpetuate Inferior Education in Ghettoes?

A view from every focal point of reason, logic, and justice seems to show that the New York City Board of Education and its subsidiaries - the Board of Examiners, the United Federation of Teachers, and the Council of Supervisory Association are welded into a tight corporate structure that supplies the kind of education that it wants to over one million and a half children in our nation's greatest metropolis. This creature, the "Get Together Club," to control public education was created by the New York State Legislature by making the Board of Examiners of the New York City Board of Education a legal entity. The bureaucratic corporation orbits around this legal nucleus in running the public school system of New York City.

II. How does the Corporation operate?

If a number of educational institutions or organizations that mutually determine each other may be said to form a system, we may refer to the New York City Board of Education as such network as a system of education control. Each unit in the system is assigned specific functions to achieve the ultimate objectives. To date, it has meant education for the dominant group and quantity mis-education for minority groups; key administrative, supervisory positions and wide job opportunity for the majority group and token low grade jobs for the minorities. The fulcrum of the operation is the Board of Examiners. All school personnel that is responsible for the direct education of the children is selected by this Board and appointed by the Board of Education. In the examining process principals, assistants, and supervisors are used. These persons are mainly used in the interviewing phase of the examination. An exceptionally high mortaility rate is experienced by African-Americans and Puerto Ricans who take the examinations to serve as teachers, supervisors, assistant principals and principals.

This process of elimination has been in operation since the early 1930's. The absence of minority competition in the public school system during the span of time has given the majority groups time to get tenure, seniority, in-service training or internship for the top administrative positions, supervisory posts, chairmanships, specialists' posts, the choice regular teacher appointments, and control of the guidance services.

The Council of Supervisory Associations is an organization of school administrators who are called upon to pass on the qualifications of candidates for various assignments. This unique role can very well be used to keep the public school administrators secure in their "private club" and blackball whomever they please without saying why a candidate is not placed. Since minority group membership in this "private club" is almost nil it is not likely that the so-called 'merit system' of selecting personnel for the New York City Public School System will make any drastic changes that see African-Americans and Puerto Ricans in top administrative and supervisory positions within the near future. This will be true even in the ghetto school where from 95% to 100% of the pupil population is African-American and/or Puerto Rican.

The role of the United Federation of Teachers in the Corporation is to secure the vantaged position of the dominant group. UFT has never addressed itself to correcting the imbalance in the upgrading of African-Americans and Puerto Ricans to principalships, assistants, supervisory posts, or superintendents. UFT has never made the foregoing an item of negotiation with the Board of Education. However, UFT has pressured the Board of Education to give "Combat Pay" to teachers who work in ghetto schools. Most of these teachers are white teachers just out of school, without experience, who remain in the ghetto schools for long enough to complete their probation.

The United Federation of Teachers has served as the status quo division of the bureaucratic corporation analysed above that controls publication in New York City.

III. How Is This Tyranny Applied To Mis-Education Of Ghetto Children?

Systematically, African-Americans and Puerto Rican-Americans are locked out of principalships even in the ghetto schools. This is true for district superintendents even in ghetto districts. A large percentage of minority group teachers only pass the test for substitute license. The guidance counselors are predominantly of the majority group. Many minority group candidates for these positions finish at the same universities and graduate with the same degrees with classmates of the dominant group, but fail the Board of Examiners' test for licenses.

The most glaring application of this tyranny is the assignment of inexperienced teachers, fresh from commencement exercises, to ghetto schools. Everything about the appointment of these new teachers is foreign to communicating and relating to the children they face. The new teachers secure themselves with defense of their middle class values and training only by labeling the children they have been assigned to teach - culturally deprived, emotionally disturbed, aggressive, slow learners, having short attention spans, short retention spans, social, anti-social, mentally retarded, academically retarded, and products of bad home environments. The new teacher does not respect her pupils, but rather rejects, and still keeps the job as teacher.

The guidance staff invariably supports the teacher against the pupils based upon an anecdotal record made by the teacher of each child's doings. After the pupils have been officially branded, little effort is made to teach them. Many are sent to "600" schools and "400" schools and many fall into the hands of attendance officers and wind up in the Youth House, Warwick, Otisville, and Hudson. An examination of the records of these institutions will reveal that their delinquency can be traced back to the failure in school. Many of these children are made delinquents in the classroom by incompetent teachers.

IV. The Establishment And The Bureaucratic Corporation

After all, the bureaucratic corporation is a traditional tool of the establishment, and the establishment is an instrument to effect the national purpose. The Ford Foundation is noted as an educational benefactor. This philanthropic organization that is presently headed by McGeorge Bundy, has supported the Educational Policies Commission, the Fund for the Republic, et al. The two organizations named have concerned themselves with defining the function of education in achieving the national purpose. Education is the historical institution through which the

United States have sought to preserve democracy. However, the national purpose has not been effected by a national school system, but through local school districts and state legislatures, regional organizations. Horace Mann proved this in his fight to develop the common school - not a school system for common people but a school system common to all people in keeping with our motto: "E Pluribus Unum." Mann's hope was that the system adopted in Massachusetts would finally be adopted across the nation. It was -, but local purposes of business and industry were considered first. The one exception historically - is the national purpose for the African-American which has been to supply the labor for back-breaking work and low paying jobs. This is true today in New York City, effected through mis-education.

The establishment has always borne the brunt of financing public education through taxation, likewise, big business and industry have controlled public education throughout the Nation from 1789 to the present.

The New York City's public school system is still influenced by the thinking of the 1890's and early 1900's - social darwinism. Exponents of this social philosophy were William H. Baldwin, Jr., Robert C. Ogden, George Foster Peabody, John Wanamaker, and Andrew Carnegie, Northern Philanthropists, and Walter Hines Page, J.L.M. Curry, Southern transplants in the North who served as Intersectional Diplomats, and Charles W. Dabney, Edwin A. Alderman, Charles D. McIver, and Edgar Gardner Murphy put together a conspiracy called the General Education Board to control the Education of African American's Public Education.

The philosophy of this combination was that the African-American was inferior to whites and he must be controlled in a different way since the chains of slavery had been broken. Effectuating this philosophy, making it appear respectable to the world, while achieving its goals of domination of the black, the real purpose was clothed in education. The real purpose is revealed in the words of William H. Baldwin who stated the Negro "will willingly fill the more menial positions and do the heavy work, at less wages," leaving to whites "the more expert labor." Baldwin's advice to the Negro was very definite: "Avoid social questions; leave politics alone; continue to be patient; live moral lives; live simply; learn to work...know that it is a crime for any teacher, white or black, to educate the Negro for positions which are not open to him..."

(CAPON SPRINGS CONFERENCE FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH, 1899, w.d., pp. 28-29)

One must never forget that in any country education is an institution of social control. Therefore, if one is to survive and progress in a given social order he must not only master the three R's but must understand the purposes and goals of the educational system. This is the strongest basis for parents to participate to fight for a voice in the education for their children. Such a right is backed by the United States Constitution itself - specifically, the preamble, article IV, section 2a, the first amendment, and the 14th amendment.

Big business, heavy industry, and the financial establishment not only determine the bureaucratic corporations that control social institutions, these are a part of the power structure that determines the national purpose and the national power. All these reside in the policital, economic and military domains.

V. Parent Participation

When the New York City Board of Education and Mayor Lindsay proposed a Task Force headed by McGeorge Bundy, President of the Ford Foundation, to recommend plans for quality education in the ghettoes of New York City, the ghost of the past appears. This is especially true when the Board of Education refuses to listen to the people who are suffering from inferior segregated education. Does social darwinism still live in the city of New York? Parents and the ghetto communities must never trust any Task Force to effect Quality Education in their communities except when it includes the Task Force of the community headed and peopled by the community to deal directly with the Board of Education and other responsible authority whose public duty is to effect Quality Education in the City of New York. All legal measures and constitutional safeguards must be used by ghetto residents to see to it that ghetto children must not be educationally short-changed another school term.

VI. Should the Universities Devise the Plan?

The educational experts and university intellectuals are responsible for the chaos the ghetto child is now in - educationally. They must not be trusted any longer for these have been architects who have designed the poor education system which debilitates ghetto children.

VII. Indigenous Plans Must Prevail

The competent designers of a plan for effecting Quality Education for ghetto children to cope with the demands of their time are the inhabitants of the ghetto, eg. parents who know the short-comings of their children, organization people in the ghetto communities who see and suffer the disorganizing effects of poor education. The educators, experts, colleges and universities have denied that ghetto residents have a culture. They have failed to plan effective education for the people who are saddled with the ghetto for the last fifty years. The teacher training programs in our colleges have not heeded the demands of the times. These programs have been slaves to the elite and the middle class ignoring the fact that in America we have a pluralistic population and culture that should not be destroyed but preserved because it is a vital part of the American identity.

These personalities and institutions should listen with all senses attuned to the voices of the people who have been crying in the wilderness for effective education for decades. If the experts will hear and exploit their resources to meet the challenge of the people, bureaucracy will give way to viable democracy.

VIII. What Should The UFT And Other Corporates Do?

The United Federation of Teachers is not qualified to devise a plan for Quality Education in the ghetto for it is a part of the crew that has neutralized education for the ghetto child. The UFT, et al have set themselves up as the masters even to writing the history of African Americans and Puerto Ricans without studying a primary book on the subject not to mention pursuing a collegiate or graduate course in either the history or the culture. The UFT is an organization to secure jobs for white teachers and leave minority teachers to COW-TOW to the Board of Examiners.

One immediate recommendation comes to mind. Put into operation immediately the N.Y.U. Report which has been made three times and substantially supported by the Faulkner Watts NAACP Report, Dr. Mark C. Shinnerer Report and the Allen Report.

Heed the teachings of History that the time has come when the ideas of the neglected should be heard. This is high noon of 1967 in the space age and the light glows in the ghetto.

The 1900 methods of Baldwin and Booker T. Washington will not work in 1967. The Board of Education, Board of Examiners, Council of Supervisory Associations, The United Federation of Teachers, New York State Legislature, outside appointed Task Forces, Philanthropic Foundations, et al., University Professors must realize that the tyranny of the majority against the minorities in an enlightened democracy cannot survive.

A NEW ORDER

Social disorganization of the sort described here requires revisions, destructions, and replacements. These changes should take place on the public stage with wide and varied participation. It should represent a joint effort of vested authority and Citizenry.

To effect a change that will stop the disintegration of New York Public Education System we must develop:

1. New Educational Philosophies.
2. New Educational Institutions.
3. New Curricula for our Colleges and Universities in the Humanities and Social Sciences.
4. New Professionals, Experts, and Technicians.

It appears to me that American Citizens grow from boys and girls. They should be carefully cultivated if America is to remain strong and viable in the World Community. Color and human differences are diseases that will destroy the young crops and our Citizenship production will diminish.

And, finally, we have arrived at our central action thesis which is: We cannot discuss the disruptive child without discussing what produces a disruptive child in the New York City School System. We cannot change the conditions which produce the disruptive child without changing the system.

Examined closely, one can readily see that this is what the recent New York City school crisis was really about - THE CHILD - especially the BLACK GHETTO CHILD, whose inner rebellion against the New York City System of Mis-education earned for him the euphemism ----------

"THE DISRUPTIVE CHILD."

It is written that "A little child shall lead them!". Now we solemnly propose and resolve that "this child" shall lead us into the appropriate actions that flow from the following recommendations:

1. Create a "community climate" which permits us to teach the child, rather than react to a behavior syndrome which supposedly describes the child.

2. Reconstruct the Bureau of Child Guidance and the infamous "600" schools to change the former from a "branding" and a "railroading" unit to a service unit; and the latter from a "Prep School" for delinquents and criminals into a school designed for community living.

3. Secure Bi-Lingual Teachers for non-English speaking children.

4. Require general subject matter and its treatment of minority group history, heritage and culture.

5. Replace the Board of Examiners with New York State Certification for all educational personnel, so that black and Puerto Rican people can become Superintendents, Administrators, District Supervisors, Principals, Assistant Principals, Department Chairmen, Teachers, Teachers Aides, and Teachers Assistants.

AND A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD US INTO THAT NEW ORDER
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